

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY SOFIA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 133233

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SHUM, BU (MAREVA, RUMYANA AND YORDANKA)

SUBJECT: MAREV CASE

REF: SOFIA 1230

1. MAREV GIRLS AND AUNT, MRS. ZHELEZOVA, ARRIVED IN NEW YORK ON JUNE 8 AS SCHEDULED. MR. AND MRS. MAREV AND SMALL DAUGHTER, RFE CORRESPONDENT (PENTCHEFF) AND EUR/EE DIRECTOR ANDREWS MET THE PLANE.

2. EMBASSY MESSAGES WERE CONVEYED TO MAREV PARENTS IN PRESENCE OF PENTCHEFF BEFORE ARRIVAL OF THE PLANE. ANDREWS DESCRIBED SOFIA AIRPORT DEPARTURE, LENGTH OF TRIP FROM VARNA TO US, AND NEED FOR PARENTS AND GIRLS TO BECOME SLOWLY RE-ACQUAINTED AFTER YEARS OF SEPARATION. HE ALSO EXPLAINED THAT GIRLS WERE COMING ON ONE MONTH'S VISIT BECAUSE OF THEIR UNCERTAINTY AND CONFUSION ABOUT THE TRIP, BUT EXPRESSED HOPE THAT THERE WOULD BE NO DIFFICULTY IN ARRANGING PERMANENT RESIDENCE ONCE GIRLS BECAME ADJUSTED. MAREV PARENTS
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EXPRESSED VIEW THAT AUTHORITIES HAD PROBABLY BEEN SEEKING TO PERSUADE GIRLS AGAINST JOINING PARENTS AND HAD THEREFORE INSISTED ON ONE MONTH'S VISIT ONLY. ANDREWS ADMITTED THAT VIRTUALLY ALL EMBASSY'S INFORMATION CAME FROM BULGARIAN MFA BUT SAID THAT IT WAS SURELY VERY DIFFICULT FOR GIRLS TO

LEAVE BEHIND RELATIVES, FRIENDS AND ORPHANAGE'S STAFF IN

ORDER TO JOIN PARENTS THEY DID NOT REMEMBER OR REMEMBERED ONLY POORLY. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, IT WAS UNDERSTANDABLE THAT GIRLS WOULD BE CONFUSED, ESPECIALLY BY SUDDENNESS OF DEPARTURE FOR US, AND A VISIT TO THEIR PARENTS WAS A REASONABLE SOLUTION TO A DIFFICULT SITUATION.

3. MRS. MAREV ASKED WHY MRS. ZHELEZOVA WAS ACCOMPANYING THE GIRLS AND NOT EITHER HER MOTHER OR ONE OF HER SISTERS. MAREV WONDERED IF THE BULGARIAN AUTHORITIES HAD ARRANGED THIS BECAUSE THEY TRUSTED HER MORE THAN THE OTHERS. ANDREWS SAID HE COULD NOT ANSWER THAT. HE SUGGESTED THAT MAREVS SEEK EARLY OPPORTUNITY, WHEN GIRLS ARE OUT OF HEARING, TO HAVE PRIVATE CONVERSATION WITH MRS. ZHELEZOVA ABOUT THE BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CASE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE FAMILY MEMBERS IN BULGARIA. HE ALSO SAID HE ASSUMED MRS. ZHELEZOVA HAD A VISA VALID FOR ONE MONTH AND RECOMMENDED THAT SHE REMAIN WITH THEM AS LONG AS THE GIRLS STILL NEEDED HER AS A TIE TO THEIR PREVIOUS LIFE IN BULGARIA.

4. PENTCHEFF TOLD ANDREWS HE HAD TAPED INTERVIEW WITH MAREV IN WHICH MAREV HAD THANKED AMERICAN AND BULGARIAN GOVERNMENTS FOR BRINGING FAMILY TOGETHER. HE ASKED WHETHER HE SHOULD TRY TO ASK THE GIRLS SOME QUESTIONS - SUCH AS, WERE THEY HAPPY TO SEE THEIR PARENTS AGAIN - BUT READILY AGREED THAT IF THE GIRLS WERE TIRED AND CONFUSED IT WOULD NOT BE WORTHWHILE TO TALK TO THEM.

5. IN THE EVENT, THE GIRLS DID NOT HUG, KISS OR SAY ANY-
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THING TO THEIR PARENTS. THEY SEEMED UTTERLY BEWILDERED AND WITHDRAWN. MAREVS WERE TEARFUL AND PROBABLY UNHAPPY AT THE LACK OF THE GIRLS' RESPONSIVENESS TO THEM. GIRLS ALSO DID NOT REACT TO MEETING THEIR LITTLE SISTER. PENTCHEFF, VIEWING THE SCENE, WISELY DECIDED TO STAY OUT OF THE WAY AND DO HIS REPORT WITHOUT FURTHER INTERVIEWING. IT WAS A SAD AND SOBERING OCCASION.

6. MAREVS WERE PLANNING TO SPEND THE NIGHT IN NEW YORK, DRIVE DOWN TO WASHINGTON JUNE 9, COLLECT THEIR BELONGINGS AND RETURN TO CHICAGO.

7. DEPARTMENT IS NOT AWARE OF ANY PRESS COVERAGE IN JUNE 9 MORNING PAPERS BUT HENRY BRADSHAW OF WASHINGTON STAR IS PLANNING A STORY WHICH MAY BE IN THE JUNE 9 EDITION. VANCE

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